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Charivaria

It is reported that a girl called recently on a New York business-man and asked if she could marry his son. She just walked in and questioned the pop.

"Everest, the world's highest mountain, is growing higher still," remarks *Answers*. But then everything has gone up since the war.

An Impending Apology

"I congratulate the parents on the very nice set of boys at Blundell's. It is difficult to believe that the ladies I see here are really the mothers."—*Report of Speech-Day in School Magazine*.

An American says he has travelled all round the globe and always finds it difficult to get breakfast served in his bath. Our goldfish has no such complaint.

A correspondent says that he attended an opera performance at which all the Nazi leaders were present in full evening dress. Careful readers of *Punch* already know whose was fullest.

The husband who earns the money should decide how it is to be spent or know the reason why, says a judge. Most husbands know the reason why.

A family of cats recently exhibited at a show were black with white chests and black bands round the neck. This is of course quite wrong when tails are worn.

A gardening expert warns his readers that early-sown potatoes need protection against the cold weather. We always plant ours with their jackets on.

"Gentleman (40), 20 year's shipping, secretarial, &c., at present employed Air Ministry, urgently requires Post where brains and experience can be utilised."—*Advt. in "Daily Telegraph"*.

Has Sir KINGSLEY WOOD seen this?

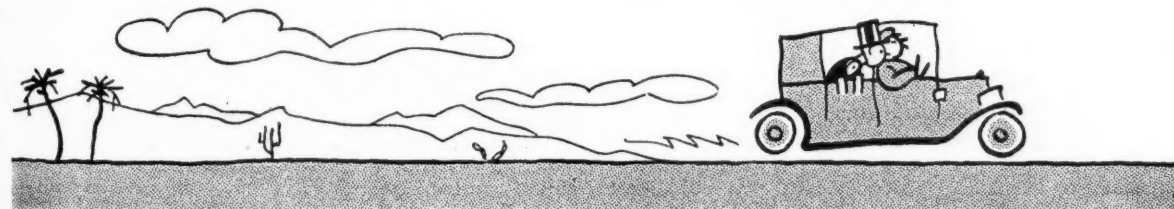
"Britons will never allow themselves to be driven too far," declares an M.P. He has obviously never fallen into the clutches of a London taxi-driver.

A new novel starts with the marriage of the hero and heroine. Feminine readers will follow the story eagerly right up to the happy beginning.

"REFUGEE TAKES HITCH."
Daily Paper.

It will be a job to find an interpreter.

Bruin, a four-year-old grizzly in an American zoo, refused to enter a new cage and was finally pushed in by six keepers. Pressure was brought to bear.





"Well then, just a weak Sherry."

Black Work

IF you was to ask me (said Mr. Harrison) whether I thought animals was what you might call sensitive to colour I'd be tempted to up and say No. And then again I'd remember the case of that old ewe I had, and there was no doubt about it—*she* reacted to colour in a way that was astonishing.

The start of it was when she gave birth to a black lamb. She'd had lambs before, but it was her first black one and it upset her considerable. I don't go so far as to say there's a colour-bar among sheep, but a body could see that when she noticed the colour of her youngster she warn't best pleased. She reckoned herself as respectable a ewe as there was, and she just couldn't account for it. Nice little lamb it was too, but she was too worried over its complexion to be able to appreciate the rest of it. The old lady was sort of diffident and apologetic and didn't go out of her way to show the lamb off to nobody. Touchy old thing, she was, and her idea seemed to be that her and her lamb was the laughing-stock of the lambing-pen. Which was very far from the case, it being a well-known fact that a sheep ain't got no more sense of humour than a magistrate.

After a bit, though, she began to turn things over in her mind, and I suppose she began to judge it was up to her to do something about it. "Tain't natural," you could 'most see her reasoning, "for a lamb to be born this here outland-

ish colour. The thing only wants tackling in a determined way." So she treated that poor unfortunate lamb in a way that would have carried a weaker youngster off in a couple of days. I seen her with my own eyes push it out into the middle of the paddock with her nose when it was raining fit to make the skies dry for a year, and hold it there until the sun come out again. Yes, and I've watched her fool around with it by the hour on the edge of the horse-pond, waiting for a chance to shove it in. Well, a fat old sheep ain't got just the biggest advantage when it comes to playing tag with a lively lamb, so she never give it the ducking she was aiming to. And as for the rain, it didn't do a mite of good—just seemed to freshen the black up. The old lady got pretty dispirited, but she warn't giving up hope, not by a long way. "Well, well," she says to herself, "if rain won't do the trick I must see what licking can do."

Well, Sir, the way the old lady just lay-to and went to licking that lamb was downright impressive. She had her share of perseverance, and she needed every drop of it. It's a wonder to me she didn't lick that lamb's wool clean off his back. She'd wake up in the morning early on purpose to get on with her licking, and she'd finish up at night that weary about the tongue-muscles she just hadn't the strength to haul her tongue in, but went to sleep with it hanging out. It didn't make no difference to the lamb.

though, 'cepting it grew up one of the finest, activist lambs you ever come across on account of all the massage it was getting.

THE old lady kept it up for some months, and after all, when you come to think of it, being as she was a sheep she hadn't got much else to do. And then she got her reward. The youngster gradually began to bleach, as you might say, until it was just the same colour as any other ordinary lamb. It's my belief the old lady was pretty took aback, but there it was, and she went around in a state of conceit over what she'd done that was sinful to see.

You and me, of course, we know that nine times out of ten a black lamb *will* grow up white, but it never occurred to her it was the hand of nature and not her own tongue. No, she was just bloated with bumptiousness. It would have been all right if she'd stopped at that, but she didn't. She got restless and ambitious. She was so set up with herself on account she'd turned that lamb a decent reasonable colour that she got big ideas of herself and concluded there warn't nothing she couldn't turn white if she gave her mind to it. And what does the poor puffed-up fool do but get to work on my great black Aberdeen Angus bull.

Yes, Sir, she was sort of strolling along, aimless and bored, when she seen this here bull, him being a quiet gentlemanly chap and given the run of the smaller paddock, and her eyes just lit up with ambition. She give her tongue a flick to kind of unlimber it and trotted over to the bull and settled down to work.

Now I won't disguise from you, Sir, that a sheep that's contracted to lick an Aberdeen Angus bull white is going to be a tolerably busy sheep for the rest of its life. The colour, as you might say, is fast, and there's plenty of area requiring attention. If she hadn't been such a chuckle-head she'd have seen in a week or two she'd bitten off more than she could chew, and she'd have owned it and stepped down. But not her! Lick? It's a wonder to me she had any tongue left. The old bull liked it, mind you. Bulls don't get a deal of petting, and a little attention was a thing he warn't going to miss as long as the old lady cared to hand it out. It warn't long before she made up her mind she'd taken on a sizeable job, but that didn't weaken her resolution. She regarded it as her life-work.

"Why don't you try keeping 'em apart?" says my missus. "She'll wear herself out, poor thing!"

Well, I *did* try keeping 'em apart, but it didn't work. The old lady was fretting all the time to be back on the job, and I had to let her into the paddock again. I wouldn't like to say how long she wasted on that bull, but I reckon you might say she put in the best years of her life, and it never made a bit of difference. She got quite angry about it towards the end. "Darn me!" you could see her thinking, "I *will* get him white! I done it with my own lamb, didn't I? Very well then."

But she warn't no nearer succeeding when I took and sold the bull. I hoped it would be a happy release for the old lady, but nothing of the kind. She was a sheep that had put her hand to the plough, and she regarded it as a disgrace that I'd let that bull go out of the farm as black as the day it was born. She was that disappointed she went into a decline, and I didn't know what to do. I was scared for her mind.

WELL, Sir, I thought and I thought, and I found a way out. I drove a big black horse into the paddock with her. First thing off she didn't take no notice—she was grieving too much over the bull. But I counted on that black horse being a challenge to her nature. It warn't no Aberdeen Angus, but it was several steps higher up than a lamb. And

I was right. After a few days she took a weary languid sort of a lick at it, and once she started she kept at it. In one day under three weeks she had that horse white and brown all over excepting for a spot on the top of its head where she couldn't reach, even when it was laying down. She didn't worry about the brown bits, and as for the black spot, she couldn't see it, so that didn't worry her neither. When she was through with the job she was satisfied. There warn't nothing bigger around for her to tackle, and she was ready to retire.

Yes, that horse saved her reason, I reckon. I knew she'd be able to make a good job of it. It was a skewbald I'd sold myself to Grapshott the undertaker, and when he sent it back to me to be turned out to grass I knew it was just plain Providence.

Epitaph

HERE lies Sir Hezekiah Mammoth, who
Amassed a million-and-a-half in glue.
Completely unendowed with grace or wit,
He found his *métier* and stuck to it.



"One of your neighbours has complained that you don't keep your dog under proper control."



"... she loves me not!"

Assistant Masters: Are They Insane?

From the papers of A. J. Wentworth

BOYS are curious creatures. This morning, *à propos* of some point that arose in connection with percentages, Williamson asked whether it was true that schoolmasters were to be exempt from National Service, and I said I believed it was and explained that even in wartime education had to go on. Several boys said it was a swizz (meaning swizzle). Hopgood II. then advanced the extraordinary theory that in an emergency everybody who had a moustache would be compelled to shave it off. If Mason or Atkins had made such a statement I should have come down on them pretty sharply, as I wear a small moustache myself and have had reason in the past to suspect both these boys of impertinence (though, to be fair, not actually on that subject), but Hopgood II. is a quiet studious boy, who, as I wrote in his Report last term, is keen on his work and should do well. So I asked him, with a smile, what would be the purpose of such an extreme measure, to which he replied that he thought it had something to do with mustard-gas and that people with moustaches would be more difficult to decontaminate than those without. This made Mason and some of the others laugh so immoderately that I had to call the set to order.

"That will do," I said sharply. "Stranger things than that may happen in war."

Etheridge suddenly shouted out "Beards!" and went

very red when I asked him to explain himself. He apologised and said he had just realised that Hopgood must mean beards, not moustaches, because you couldn't get a gas-mask on with a beard because it had to be rolled up inside, and then it choked you, or anyway you couldn't see clearly through the eye-pieces.

"That is as it may be, Etheridge," I began, "but we are not here to discuss whether or not beards can be worn with gas-masks—"

"Couldn't they cut a slit in the chin-part to let the beard out?" interrupted Mason rather rudely.

"Say 'Sir' if you are speaking to me, Mason," I reminded him, but it turned out that he was speaking to Etheridge.

I hoped that this not very edifying discussion was now at an end, but Williamson, despite a warning from me, started an argument with Mason about the effects of mustard-gas on beards, objecting that if a beard was left hanging outside the mask it would be destroyed. Mason said he didn't believe it and anyway it wouldn't matter much if it was, and Hillman then chipped in with the remark that it was a pity old Mr. Poole (our dear old French master, who retired a year ago) wasn't still here; they could have put some mustard on his beard and watched the result.

"He put a good deal on it himself in his time," Mason said, "and nothing happened."

"It grew longer, if anything," said Atkins.

One of the things every schoolmaster has to learn sooner or later is never to permit, still less to encourage, criticism of his colleagues. Nothing is more fatal to discipline than to appear even for a moment to countenance any lack of respect for another master, whatever one's personal opinions may be (it went against the grain, for instance, to punish Heathcote the other day for a remark he made about Major Faggott, but I had to do it); and I certainly did not propose to allow slighting references to such a faithful old friend and loyal servant of the school as Mr. Poole, just because he was no longer with us. I told them pretty straight that it was cowardly to attack people behind their backs, and I was not going to have it; they would never have dared to suggest putting mustard on Mr. Poole's beard and so on if he had been still at Burgrove.

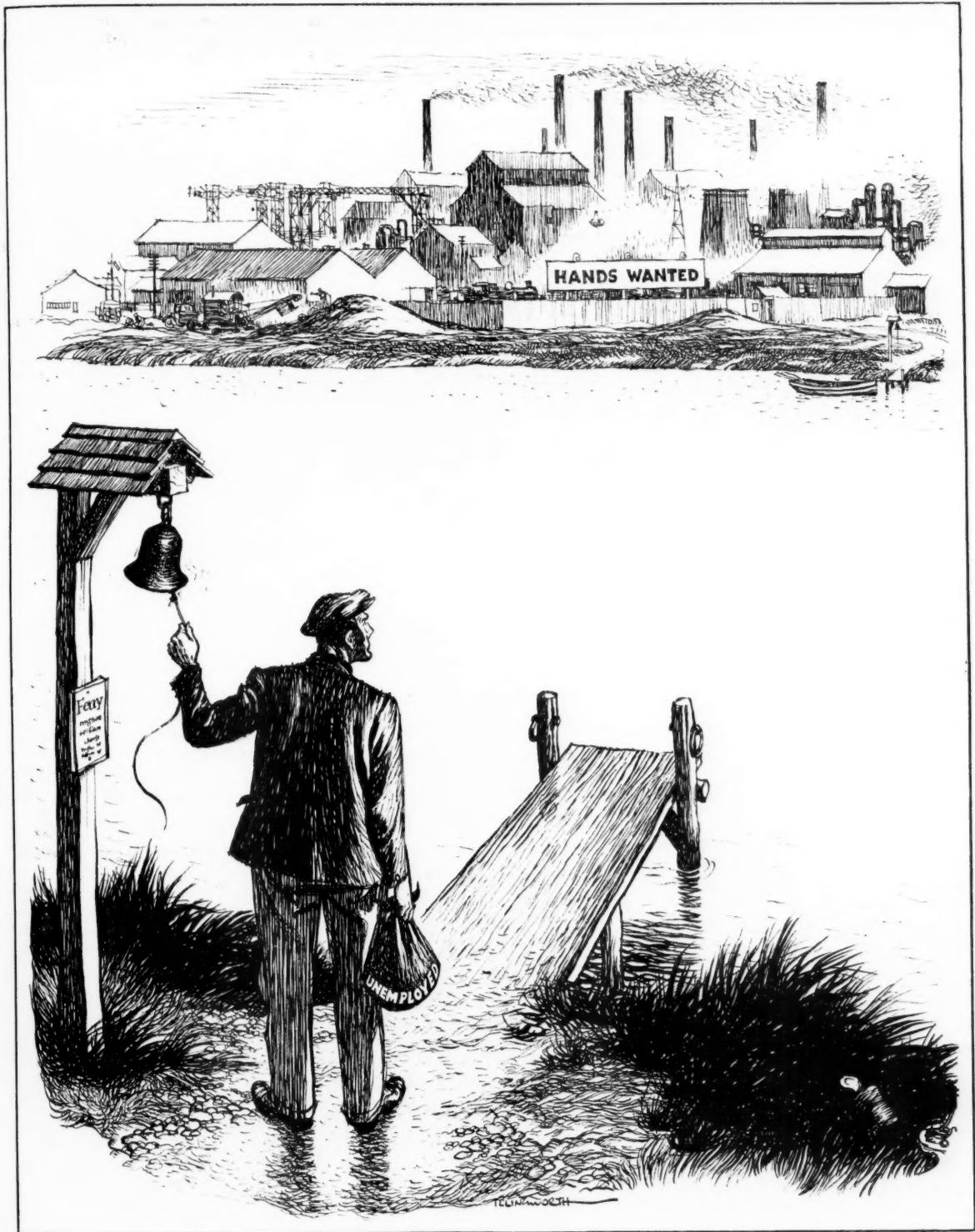
I had forgotten, as a matter of fact, until Mason reminded me of it, that they did actually put salt in the old man's hair one day towards the end of his time here, when he was losing something of his vigour and grip. How it was done, remains a mystery. According to one story, the salt was sprinkled in his hat, according to another they somehow persuaded poor Poole that it was good for his scalp and put it on with his consent. Yet a third account says that it was not ordinary salt but effervescent, and that the point of the joke (if such it could be called) came when he smoothed down his hair, as was his invariable custom, with a damp brush. But whatever the truth of the matter, it was a cruel prank and nothing, as I told Mason, to laugh about.

"However," I went on, "as you all seem so interested in the subject of gas-masks, let me see what you can make of this: In a town of four thousand five hundred inhabitants two hundred and forty of the men were bearded—"

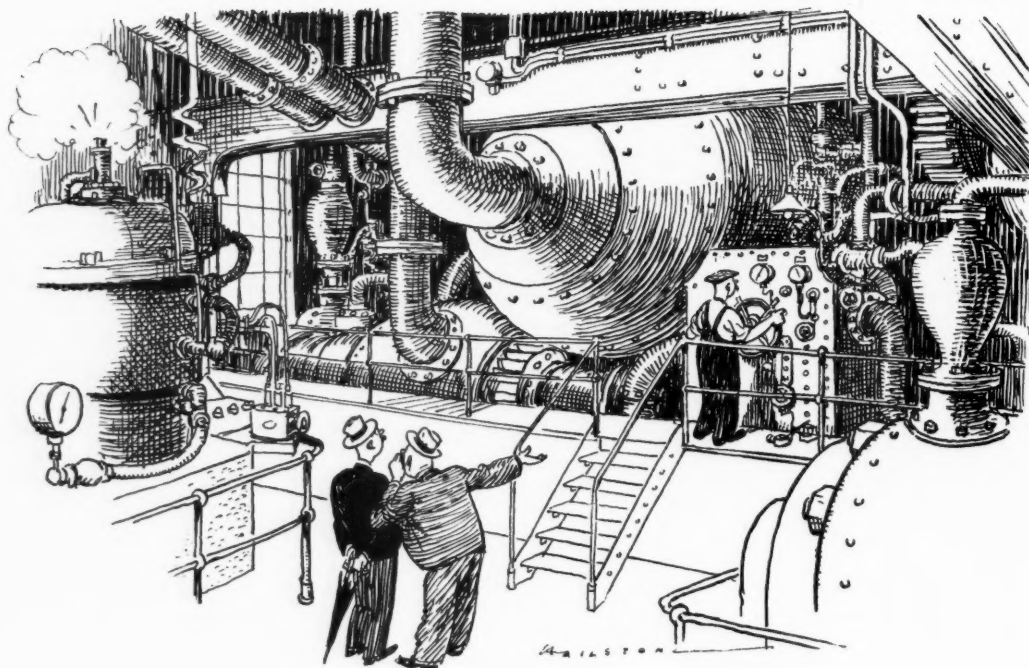
"In Greece," remarked Sapoulos, "that would give surprise."

"How many of the women?" asked Atkins.

I mention these stupid interjections only to observe that a schoolmaster's success or failure in dealing with young boys depends upon the extent to which he allows himself to be disconcerted or thrown out of his stride by over-eager or ill-timed interruptions. Experience has taught me that to ignore them is often quite sufficient rebuke to the boys concerned. Spoken reproof, except in cases of glaring impertinence or insubordination, is unnecessary and may



FERRY AHOY!



"... He also plays the piccolo in the works' band."

lead to endless controversy. The golden rule is, Never allow oneself to be side-tracked.

"—what percentage of the population," I proceeded smoothly, "would find an ordinary gas-mask difficult or impossible to adjust?"

One or two boys, as usual, wanted the question repeated, but in two or three minutes they were all hard at work. Nothing arouses their keenness so much as a really practical problem to solve, and of course there was the added incentive of ten marks for the first boy to show up the correct answer, nine for the second, and so on. I had hardly had time to jot down the figures myself before Etheridge arrived at my desk to claim the highest mark, followed in quick succession by Hillman, Trench and Williamson. Then Heathcote and Atkins had a race, though they know perfectly well that I will not have running or scrapping in the class-room, and ended by knocking over my ink-pot. I whipped open the desk, through the hinge of which the ink was already beginning to pour, and to my dismay found that I had only a small scrap of blotting-paper. The boys helped with what they had, but it was quite insufficient to deal with the situation. There was nothing for it but to send Etheridge off with a note to Major Faggott, who has taken over Rawlinson's duties in charge of the stationery commissariat—loth though I was to ask any favour of the man. I took care to explain the urgency of the case, and so could hardly believe my eyes when Etheridge returned without any blotting-paper but with a brief *unsealed* note from Faggott saying "Soak it up yourself."

I put the note in my pocket without a word and went straight along to Faggott's class-room. I found him with his feet up on the desk reading to the boys, I was quick to notice, from Green's *History of the English People*, though I know for a fact that Rawlinson uses Oman. "Hallo!" he said, not troubling to alter his position. "Anything wrong?"

I was boiling with rage but controlled myself in front of the form and simply said that I was sorry to disturb him in any way (with a meaning glance at his feet) but I must have blotting-paper at once, as there had been an accident.

"Well," he said, "the cupboard's open."

I turned on my heel and left the room. It was quite obvious that it never entered his head to come along with me and hand out the blotting-paper himself in the proper way. Not that I minded fetching it myself, in a way, but that the stationery-cupboard should be left like that, *unlocked* on a *Thursday* . . .

I shall not, of course, allow the matter to rest there.

H. F. E.

The Very Rich Man

He bought and sold; he dredged the world for pelf:

He called it "just my struggle for survival";

It was amazing how he loved himself;

But less amazing that he had no rival.

Shanghai Trouble

A Late Pass for Hungjao

From Mrs. Berkeley, 16 Rue Auguste Boppe, French Concession, Shanghai, to Mrs. Leicester, Whitegates, Hung-jao, Shanghai.

DEAR MRS. LEICESTER, — Could you and your husband dine with us on Monday next at eight P.M. ? I know that the Japanese are still enforcing an early curfew at Hungjao, but I hear that it is quite a simple matter for you to get a special late pass. Better get the pass valid up till midnight in case we decide to go to the pictures after dinner.

And so next morning on my way to town I dash into the Japanese Military Headquarters to ask for a special late pass. I'm already late for an appointment at the hairdressers; but getting a pass can't possibly make me more than two minutes later.

I am asked: "What is your name? Address? Nationality? Occupation?" These questions are easily answered, each answer being greeted with a lengthy "A-a-h, so desu-ka" ("Is that so?") from the polite little Japanese officer and then laboriously written down. It is rather like playing a game; but the next question startles me: "How old is your husband?"

Careful now, my girl; think quickly before you answer because there must be a catch in this one! How does the

age of one's husband affect the situation? I wonder if the Japanese equivalent of the King's Regulations prohibits husbands *under* a certain age from staying out late for fear of them getting into mischief? Or does a fatherly Japanese Government see that elderly husbands are not kept up until the small hours by frivolous wives? I take a chance on it, picking a safe middle-age figure, and the game carries on.

"When do you require pass?"

"For twelve p.m. next Monday—the 20th."

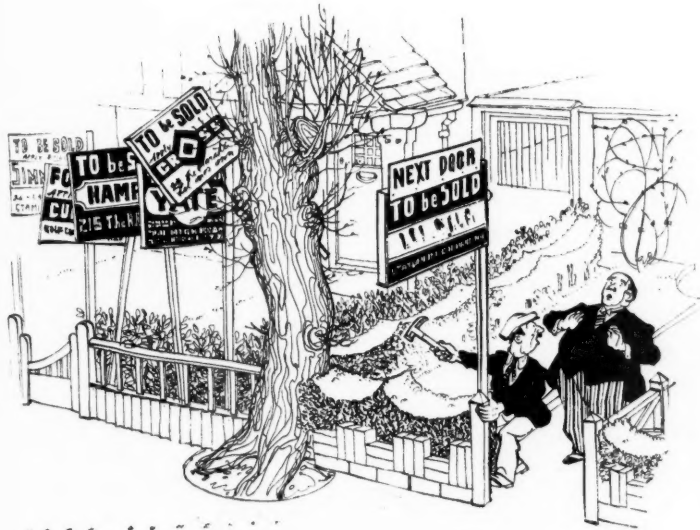
"A-a-h, so desu-ka." (Scribble, scribble.) "For twelve P.M. Shanghai time or Tokyo time?"

"Well, Shanghai time, I suppose, as we're in Shanghai."

"A-a-h, so desu-ka." (Scribble, scribble.) "Pass must be issued for Tokyo time. Twelve P.M. Monday 20th, Shanghai time, is one A.M. Tuesday 21st, Tokyo time. I will issue pass for Tuesday 21st."

Here I begin to get a bit flustered. "But if you make out the pass for the 21st and the party breaks up about eleven o'clock on Monday it will still be the 20th. Will that matter?"

"A-a-h, so desu-ka. I am very sorry for you. Pass issued for Tuesday may not be used on Monday. For what reason is pass required?"



"Well, there's no more room in there."

"We've been invited to dine with some friends."

"A-a-h, so desu-ka." (Scribble, scribble.) "What is occupation of friends?"

"He is Manager of an Insurance Company."

"A-a-h, so desu-ka." (Scribble, scribble.) "What kind of insurance—fire insurance or life insurance? What is name of friends?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Berkeley. B-E-R-K-E-L-E-Y—but you pronounce it 'Barkly'—you know, 'bark,' like a dog's bark."

"A-a-h, so desu-ka. What kind of dogs has friends got? What is address of friends?"

"16, Rue Auguste Boppe" (this with my best French accent).

"A-a-h, so desu-ka." But no scribbling this time. "Rue O——? Excuse please."

"AUGUSTE—it's like the name of the month, only it has an 'e' at the end. You know, the months of the year—June, July, *August*."

"A-a-h! so desu-ka! You want pass for June, July and August. I am very sorry for you. Cannot issue pass for three months."

I here begin to answer weakly but wildly. "No, no. *I* am very sorry for you. I mean I'm sorry I wasn't clear. I mean I don't mean I want a pass for June, July and August. I mean I only meant that Auguste is like the month—August."

"A-a-h, so desu-ka. Pass is only required for August. Where is Rue O-gus-to Bop-pi? Please show on map."

After much searching: "Well, it doesn't seem to be marked on this map. But it is just here, see?—a turning off Rue General Courbet."

"A-a-h, so desu-ka. Rue Ge——
Excuse please."

"G-E-N-E-R-A-L. You know, General—a military rank. The road is named after someone in the French Army."

"A-a-h, so desu-ka. French military road! I am very sorry for you. Pass cannot be issued for French military road."

*From Mrs. Leicester, Whitegates, Hung
jao, to Mrs. Berkeley, 16 Rue Auguste
Boppe, French Concession, Shanghai*

DEAR MRS. BERKELEY,—I am sorry to say that we shall not be able to dine with you on Monday next at eight P.M. We could, however, come at one A.M. on the 21st of next August—if the 21st happens to be a Tuesday—and IF in the meantime you can change your address to one that offers no phonetic calendar, naval, military, national or international complications.

P.S.—I hear that "The Limes," Great West Road, is vacant.

Up, the Dutch!—III.

WE did not ride a Dutch bicycle. But we were determined to ride home to London in a Dutch barge. The Dutch barges—"motor-booten" the Dutch call them, and "coasters" the English call them, but "barges" we like to call them still, for the barge was their mother and father, though it is true that they have grown almost too big and ship-like for their simple parents to know them—the Dutch barges, then, are very numerous in London River. In almost every reach you will see one or two unloading to-day. The British bargemen lie at the buoys waiting for freights, and complain a little about the Dutchmen, for in the old days the British sailing-barge used to trade with Dutchland, but now she is seen in those waters no more.

The sad truth is that, not for the first time, the Dutch have invaded the Thames, and with a most efficient fleet. There is nothing surprising in this. The Dutch cities have not, like London, ceased to be "water-minded." To see the water-life of Amsterdam or Rotterdam you do not have to obtain permits, sneak past policemen, or climb over high dock-walls. The barges are as common as the bicycles, and if you fell off your bicycle you would probably fall on to a barge. Hundreds of exciting craft lie along the Victoria Embankment, so to speak, with not even a parapet between the pedestrian and them. The Port of London is large and busy, but you might live in London for years without knowing that it existed. In Amsterdam and Rotterdam the Port is at the front-door everywhere.

And our dear sailing-bargemen should be careful in what terms they decry the Dutch invasion. For two of the prime features of their own incomparable craft, the spritsail and the lee-board, were brought over by the Dutch, we fancy, a very long time ago, and, for a long time yet, we hope, will be seen in action from the Tower to the Nore.

NO, let us gracefully learn some more lessons from the Dutch. After much inquiry, intrigue and anxiety we joined as steward the crew of the motor-boat — at Rotterdam. We sailed at 5 P.M. and at noon next day were in the Port of London, where we deserted.

The — is a fine little ship and full of lessons. She is 140 feet long and 23 feet wide, can carry 400 tons of cargo and has a 400 horse-power Diesel engine. She does 9½ to 10 knots. She

had a general cargo, mainly food—peas, butter, cheese—to which the steward had added a bottle of Schnapps. She carried a crew of eight, including the Skipper, his Lady, and the Boy—or nine including the steward.

All is modern. In the roomy wheel-house there is a wireless directional apparatus (you listen through headphones and hear where the lightship is, though we understood the skipper to complain that the Thames lightships have no wireless transmitters). There is central heating and brilliant electric lighting. To anyone familiar with the cosy but cramped "cabin" of the London River bargemen the quarters of the Dutch Skipper, Lady and Boy call up comparisons with an ocean liner. Lady's cabin is spacious, the bed wide and covered with a shiny eiderdown; a cabin for the Boy aft of that; across the passage another roomy bedroom and a sort of "study" for the Skipper. A bathroom. Hot and cold running water in the cabins. On the deck above a comfortable "tea-room," or living-room, for the day, a galley (with gas-stove) alongside. All this is built of teak—teak!—with oak (plywood) panels.

We like the teak, the central heating, the gas-stove and the running hot water. But what we like as well as all these modern frills is the ancient shape of the ship. With her high prow, and higher poop, and her absurd little mast amidships she is a little like the ship of Ulysses, or a very young Spanish galleon.

The whole ship, the Skipper tells us, cost — to build. What, we wonder, would she cost to build in England? Many thousands more, we fancy. Rich men, they tell us, are reluctantly having their yachts built in Amsterdam, since English firms,

with the best will in the world, cannot come within miles of the Dutch price.

Why is all this? We do not understand trade and things; we must not be indiscreet; so we cannot say.

AT all events, here we are, puffing past the Hook of Holland into the dark, and despising the passenger-packet at the pier. The mate is muttering things about "gale-warnings" and we do not despise the passenger-packet so much. There was, in fact, a gale yesterday: there will, in fact, be another gale to-morrow night. But we neatly nip across between the two. Instead we run into fog, which in our judgment is worse. The little ship now seems very little indeed; the sea extremely large and cold. We see lights everywhere, hear bells and sirens—or think we do. Now and then the Boy gives a yell from the bows. The Skipper slows his noisy engine and the family shout Dutch at each other. We stop, look and listen. All is dark and dripping but silent. So we charge merrily ahead again, sounding our horrible horn. But the fog lifts and by seven A.M. the great sweeping arms of the Tongue Light are illuminating the wheel-house. We are over; we take the Prince's Channel. The Skipper's Lady is up and coffee is served.

Breakfast as we pass the Nore. No one sits till "Father" comes down from the bridge. It is Sunday morning. Grace before the meal and family prayers after it. The steward insists on washing-up under protest from the Skipper's Lady. After Gravesend the steward is permitted to take the wheel, but at Greenhithe coffee is served. We lunch at anchor in the Pool of London. Grace and prayers again; and the Skipper reads a passage from the Bible.

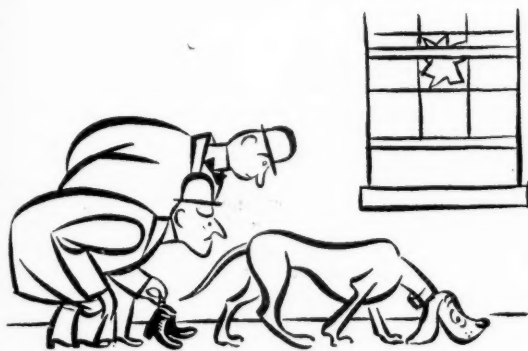
Now, safe in port—and not till now—the Skipper and his Lady consent to take a tot from the steward's bottle of Schnapps. The Boy, however, insists—and leave is given for a small one.

The flood is making; we work into dock and meet at once the Customs officers. The steward has to declare (1) six handkerchiefs (from Paris) *avec l'inscription "Vive Chamberlain!"* and (2) what is left of the bottle of Schnapps. Both are carefully examined and dealt with. The steward leaves one of the handkerchiefs to the Skipper's Lady and the bottle to the ship's stores. They will accept nothing else. Reluctantly he then deserts. "A fine passage," says the Skipper. So do we. Up, the Dutch! A. P. H.



"I am sure none of you boys are responsible for putting the frogs in Matron's bed last night."

DOUGLAS



Letters to Officialdom

XXX.—Re Car Test

To the Managing Director, The Ixion Car Co., Ltd., Coventry.

DEAR SIR,—I have been following with considerable interest the car journey to Murki Bosky in Siberia accomplished by the Motoring Correspondent of *The Sunday Senate* in a Trundler twenty-horse-power limousine. In spite of numerous accidents, including a somersault into a gorge and an encounter with a bear, I see the car eventually reached Murki Bosky and so proved the excellence not only of its engine and chassis but also of its entire equipment, while the coachwork (*vide advertisement*) "behaved magnificently."

According to the advertisements the windscreen-wipers also behaved magnificently, the horn too behaved magnificently, and even the lining of the door-pockets behaved magnificently. This lining, said the manufacturers' advertisement, was "proof even against the claws of a bear." Isn't that amazing? Is the door-pocket lining of my Ixion car proof against the claws of a bear? If not, why not? Suppose my wife and I wished to go to Murki Bosky one day and then found *en route* that the lining was not proof against the claws of any and every bear that chanced to put its paw into the door-pockets? A fine state of discomfort we should be in for the rest of the journey, I must say! (Though of course it is just possible that the bear which the Motoring Correspondent encountered wasn't a bear at all but simply an Ogpu official in disguise, searching for private papers.)

However, as I see it, the point of the Trundler's journey is that, had it been achieved *without* an accident of any kind, no tributes to the car's construction and equipment would have been deserved. In other words, the true worth of a car nowadays seems to depend not upon its normal efficiency but upon its capacity and the capacity of its equipment to withstand collision, capsizing, waterlogging, bouncing on its bonnet, falling into gorges and bumping into savage beasts, pedestrians and the like.

I have therefore tested my 1926 Ixion saloon car as far as possible in this way and have pleasure in sending you herewith the results, which in my opinion are remarkable. Indeed my only quarrel is with the name of the car, and with this I quarrel because in Greek mythology (if I remember

rightly) "Ixion's wheel" was a wheel on which a gentleman named Ixion was condemned to revolve eternally in Hades. This gives rise to rude remarks about my car, and I can only suppose that the name was chosen in order to suggest that Ixion cars can withstand any amount of over-heating. But considering the tendency of my own model to buck about and sidle sideways like a crab I think it should have been named a Centaur, which as you know was a sort of horse fathered by this man Ixion.

Now here are the tests to which I subjected my car.

First of all I concerned myself with the roof, for without a roof in rainy weather a car is practically useless. Also of course it is essential that the roof be sturdy so that the low projecting limbs of trees do not interfere with one's passage beneath them.

I therefore drove the car at thirty miles an hour down a nearby lane where there is an enormous bough extending from side to side, just low enough to catch the roof of the car. The test was entirely successful, the roof behaving magnificently. I had expected it to crumple up and splinter in all directions. Actually it came clean away from the car in one piece *without damaging the rest of the coachwork at all*. Consequently I had but to replace it bodily on the car, fasten it down with four lengths of string, and there it was looking just as good as it did when I bought the car in 1926. No one could pay your coachwork a higher tribute than this.

I then made the second test. I drove the car on down the lane into the river, which is in flood, and left it there while I walked home and had my morning cup of tea. Imagine my annoyance on returning to find that Mr. Winch, of Upper Farm, Lowerdown, had towed the car out of the river by hitching it to the cart in which he had been passing by. (Mr. Winch has an exasperating habit of meddling in my business, and I have since had words with him about this latest piece of interference.)

Nevertheless the car had been submerged for nearly an hour, so you can picture my surprise on finding that *none of the floor-mats had shrunk by even so much as an inch*, while I had the engine firing on as many as three of its four cylinders by tea-time. Please let

the makers of the mats know how magnificently they behaved.

After tea I decided to test the strength of the chassis, so I drove up to Combers Quarry, where there is a thirty-foot drop at the edge of the road. On reaching this spot I turned the car towards the quarry, set the throttle, engaged the gear, stepped out as it began to move and watched with keen interest as it plunged over the edge, hit the bottom with a resounding crash, rolled over several times and fetched up on its wheels among some brambles.

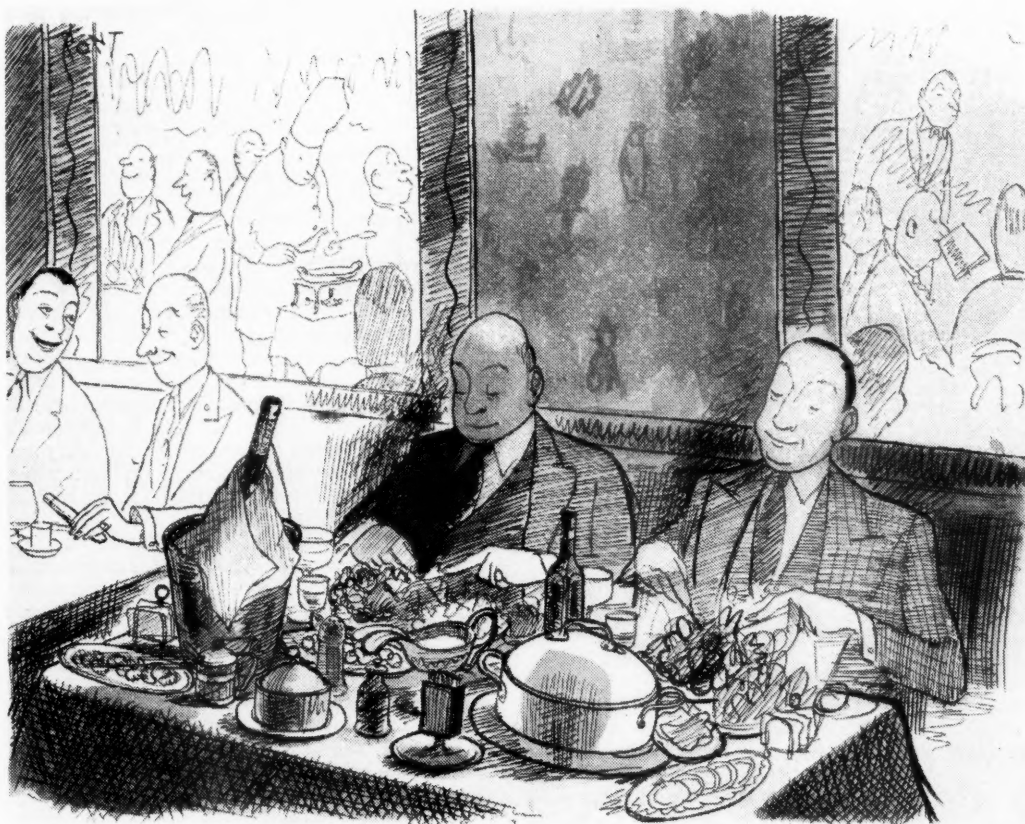
Then with a certain amount of apprehension I went down to see how the chassis had withstood this very severe test. To my amazement it had behaved magnificently, and the only damage done was to the windscreen which was smashed, one of the bumpers which was torn off, two of the wings which were bent, and the luggage-grid which was twisted round the back-axle. The chassis was unharmed.

Marvelling at the car's robustness I got in again and, forgetting it was in gear, tentatively pressed the self-starter. Would the engine answer? It did, and the next minute the car shot through the hedge into the adjoining field and proceeded at a lively pace towards a herd of cows. I accelerated, changed gear and drove straight at the largest of them, for if (I told myself) a Trundler car could survive a collision with a bear an Ixion ought to be able to survive a collision with a cow. One meets so many cows driving on the roads nowadays.

On seeing me coming, however, the animal started to run away. I pursued it twice round the field and at last succeeded in ramming it. (I had no compunction about doing this, as it was one of Mr. Winch's cows.) To my unbounded admiration the car stood this splendidly, sustaining only a bent radiator and a buckled wheel. The paintwork behaved magnificently and merely peeled off in flakes here and there.

Then I blew my horn, which was also undamaged, and sent the startled animal about its business. For two or three minutes I continued blowing the horn, just to give it a thorough test, and was about to drive off well satisfied when a terrific impact at the rear of the car drove it forward several feet and nearly dislocated my neck.

I looked round angrily and saw Mr. Winch's prize bull, Champion Göring of Batterseat, eyeing me and lashing its tail. Maintaining my presence of mind I immediately carried out a number of tests on the spot—without getting out of the car of course—so



TENDENCY AMONG BUSINESS-MEN TO BELIEVE IN DOING BUSINESS OVER LUNCH

that I could be sure afterwards that this tremendous blow had not damaged any part of the car's equipment. I tried the windscreen-wipers and they behaved magnificently. I looked at the clock, the petrol-gauge, the oil-gauge, the force-feed, the driving-mirror, the ash-trays and the lining of the door-pockets. The whole lot of them had behaved magnificently.

I thereupon restarted the car and, making Champion Göring of Batterseat dizzy with the cloud of carbon monoxide from the exhaust, drove quietly away and out of the field. As it was getting dark I turned on the lights and was reminded that I had not tested the lighting of the car. So I opened the bonnet, picked up a small rock and hurled it at the dynamo. The lights did not even flicker.

I then continued homewards, happy in the realisation that whenever in the future my car might hit a low bough, or run into a river, a cow or a quarry, or be charged by a prize bull—in short,

whenever it might meet with any of the countless common obstacles of travel on the road to-day, it, its coachwork and its equipment, would be equal to the occasion, down to its very last invisible, insignificant but essentially praiseworthy bracer-button.

Yours faithfully,

CHAS. CURSETT.

P.S.—What is the present market value of my Ixion? I may wish to dispose of it in the near future.

• •

The Realist

"THIS is the end," he wrote.

From a drawer in the bureau he took a small snub-nosed revolver.

"I have taken a revolver from my desk," he continued. "I will finish a life that you no longer value. If you do not love me I no longer value it myself."

He put the revolver to his temple. It was cool. He shuddered slightly. With his other hand he went on writing:

"The cold point of the weapon is at my head. It makes me shudder but will not turn me from my purpose. By the time you read this letter I shall be dead. People will tell you I am a coward. They will say, 'He has found the easiest way out.' Believe me, this is no easy way, but it is the only way possible for me since I am forbidden to love you."

Having written this he returned the revolver to its drawer and wrote "End of Chapter 26" at the foot of the page.

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Take Your Choice

"A well-cared-for neck will take years off the age, or add years to it!"—*Daily Paper*.

• •

"CASE FOR CHANNEL TUNNEL."
Heading in "The Scotsman."

Waterproof, of course.



"Mr. John Smith? Never heard of him."

The Romance of a Plumber

Winner Takes All

DEAR GEORGE,—After what befell last week I think the only place us ex bachelors can find peace is in a dictionary. It happened like this. On the Tues I was reading newspaper headlines such as Dwarf Ghost Haunts Bungalow, Timber Trade Loses Consignment of Square Deal on Railway, and thinking what stirring times we live in when Lucy said ooh. Lucy I said, when you ooh kindly say who you ooh to, my mind was agog with thought, well? Mothers coming round she said. The crowds could scarce forbear to cheer I said, icy. Why dont you like her? she said. The trouble is I said, when some people get long in the tooth they cant keep their mouth shut. Oh she said, I suppose your Mother was perfect, I suppose she thought you the worlds top boy. Yes I said, she could read me like a book. Personally Lucy said, I prefer thrillers.

There was all but mortal combat until her Mother came and said hows my girlie, hasnt Willy boy a kiss for his Mother in law? all right all right theres no need to look like that. I am in one of my moods I said, present vindictive. Her Mother sat in the best chair and silence until Lucy said why Mums you look very despondulant, what is up? Alas her Mother said, Im thinking of a female friend of mine who is somewhat up a gum tree. Not that nice looking peach faced married young woman? Lucy said. The identical her Mother said, her sorrow wrings my heart like a mangle, she was so happy and so young.

Husband now the late? I said. He will be if he finds out her Mother said, the trouble started when her milkman

said his cousin knew a fellow whose sisters son worked near a racing stables and heard from the fellow who grooms the horses brother that a certain horse boasted it was a certain horse in a certain race so my friend splashed heavy on it, but next day she said hay milkman I thought that tip was straight from the horses mouth and he said yes lady the perishing liar, but I know a cert you can put your shirt on today, so in a few weeks hardly a horse wasnt wearing one of my friends metaforicle shirts but maybe the pampering was hampering as they all crawled round in bottom gear if not reverse.

Ere long she said, my friends housekeeping money got lower than next years daisies and shops that used to write Settlement will Oblige began putting Settlement will Amaze, my friend thinks some whatsit must of repealed the law of averages as her percentage of wins to date is exactly nought point nought nought.

A sad story I said, I trust Lucy you do not amalgamate with such gamblers. Well she said, if a lady says nice weather to a lady a lady has to reply ever so dont I? Kindly remember the late Homer I said, he kept himself self contained and sometimes nodded. But then he wasnt in our High Street Lucy said, but reverting to our muttons it looks like as if Mothers friend will be a case of just another shattered romance just another broken heart if all is discovered. Why doesnt she tell her husband the truth? I said. Once you start that Lucy said, there is no knowing where itll stop. Suddenly she said my dream my dream. Yes precious? I said. No no she said, I mean a dream I dreamed three nights ago and have redreamed twice since, in it there is a bus going down the Strand with lots of overbearing fellows on and when the conductor shouts Wellington Street Wellington Street all the fellows say come on boys Wellington is treating us and exit and then the conductor winks and says I catch em every time lady, His Grace always makes them pay for theirselves.

Thrice was it thus? I said. Yes she said, except last



"One tuppenny, please, and a rather unruly Alsatian Wolfbound upstairs."

night the driver was different as the other one was driving a private dream for Sir S. Cripps. Lucy I said, sychie forces are at work with signs and portents to help your Mothers friend, maybe it points to a horse entered for an impending race, how many men were there on this bus? Eight and a jitterbug Lucy said. Such being so I said, here is the horse in the three thirty on Sat viz Nimbus. How so? she said. I said N for nine I for intoxicated M for men and bus for bus, this lady should stake her all on it.

Being stonier than a gravel path she cant Lucy said, unless you good Samaritan her and lend her some stake money. No doubt the bookmaker has to keep his Mother I said, so it seems a shame to back a cert but beauty in distress brings out all the Kt. in me, lend this cash to your Mothers friend. Why Willam her Mother said, you are not so bad after all.

Well George the Sat turned out so nice Lucy and me decided to take a look at the races ourselves to see Nimbuses victory. We got there and who do we see but Lionel Bunfold who once burgled us but turned bookie because he prefers working by daylight. Artnoon both he said, what can I do you for? Per pro an interested party I said, we would like to meet this Nimbus as is entered for the three thirty. I will give you an intro he said, which he did. Well Nimbus I said, are you going to win? Dont ask him a groom said, he is eating now and being a thorough bred never speaks with his mouth full but entrernoo hes got a crush on Cleopatra over there so he will be going flat out over the hurdles this afternoon to impress her.

Well George when the race started Lucy and me shouted come on Nimbus do, but Nimbus just strolled across to us and heaved a deep sigh and tears were in his eyes and he shook his head and walked back to the stables. Lionel came across and said I fear poor Nimbus had a nasty set back before the send off, he was led past Cleopatra to fill his mind with thoughts of home and beauty and he looked at her as much as to say could you care for a horse like me? but Cleopatra just went right on feeding and said him neigh, it has fair broke Nimbuses heart, the vet says he will be no use now except posing for rocking horse makers.

Well Lucy I said, your Mothers friend is bunkered now this horse has played her false. Oh contrair Lucy said. Kindly unfold I said. Well she said, I had another dream Tues night about having breakfast with Robert Taylor but in the morning it was only you so that proved dreams go by contraries, so on my suggestion Mothers friend used the stake money you lent her to give a convivial tea to all her girl friends and then tell them about my triple dream so they all said coo, do put something on Nimbus for me and she said okay girls, my bookie gives better odds than anyone else so all her friends friends staked a pile too. But Nimbus lost I said. Yes Lucy said, which is just as well as Mothers friend believes in the old saying re profiting by the mistakes of others and forgot to hand the stakes over to the bookie, she paid all creditors and had enough over to buy her trusting husband some new slippers. That is all very well I said, but what about the money I lent. You men Lucy said, all you think about is money, havent I just told you Ive bought you some new slippers, what more do you want for goodness sake?

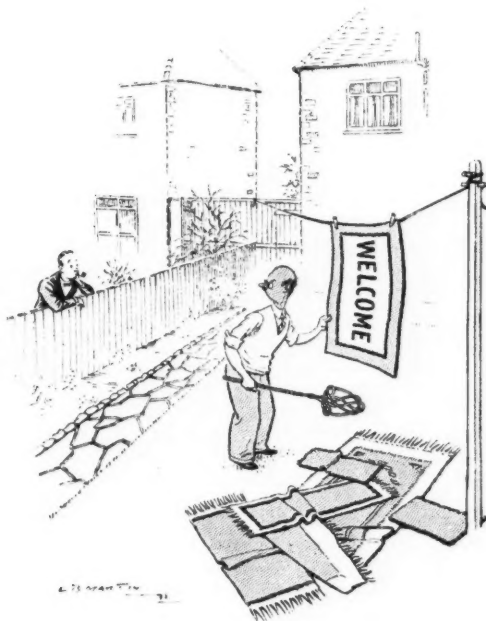
Well George as I told Lucy, only the good die young so Id better start providing now for her lonely old age. I hope you are well and am

Your affect. friend
WILLIAM TWISS.

The Ambitious Financier and the Well-known Film Magnate

AN Ambitious Financier collided one day at the Splitz Bar with an extremely prosperous-looking person who turned out to be a Well-known Film Magnate. The Ambitious Financier was an accomplished seizer of opportunities, apologised profusely for his clumsiness and asked the Well-known Film Magnate to have a drink with him. As a matter of fact the Well-known Film Magnate had recognised the Ambitious Financier, was secretly delighted at this fortuitous encounter and readily accepted the invitation. After the sixth round of champagne cocktails they decided to have a bite together, and by the time the production costs of the Well-known Film Magnate's next picture had thereby been debited with the best part of £10 and cigars had been lit over coffee and liqueurs they had agreed to form Catastrophic Films Limited with a capital of £1,000,000, and were almost on the point of quarrelling as to which of them should put up the money. It was eventually decided as a matter of mutual convenience that financial details should be left to be worked out by their respective accountants and to be submitted for their final approval in due course. A countless number of luncheon, dinner and supper parties of a Lucullan order followed each other in rapid succession, punctuated by script conferences, screen tests, studio inspections and all the other intensive preparations so necessary for the making of film history. It had in fact already been arranged to embody the whole of Shakespeare's works in one complete epic in Stridentone Putricolour, and seventy-two British, American and Continental stars had been signed up for the thirty-six leading rôles, when the accountants, who had not been idle, each reported to his client that the other party hadn't got a bean and ought not to be touched at the end of a barge-pole.

Moral: DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.



P.S.—Ever notice George how often an easy going fellow who believes in the rule of thumb marries a girl who agrees with him so long as its her thumb?



*"Sorry to be so late—I have been hunting for the right place for over an hour."
"How sad! And did you find it?"*

De Profundis

A Lay of A.R.P.

AIR Raid Shelters, y' know, said Mike.
They're a puzzlin' problem, say wot y' like;
When 'Itler's boys is out joy-ridin'
Wot's the best place for folks t' 'ide in?
I says, underground—right down deep,
Refuges-like; they mayn't be cheap
But lor! they're safe; down there, I'll bet yer.
Old 'Itler's fireworks'll never get yer.

But me pal's a plumber, an' 'e says, "Cripes!
Wot about all them drainage pipes
An' the miles o' mains an' gas an' cable?
Dig," 'e says, "as deep 's y're able,
Y'll find some blighter's been there afore
An' there ain't no room for anythin' more;
You start diggin' deep down an' under
An' the stuff you'll strike," says 'e, "you'd wonder!"

An' th' Air Raid Warden, 'e says, "Coo!
Underground, eh? O.K. for you,
But wot price me when the rush gets goin'
An' a bare five minutes t' get below in?

A nice an' orderly lot they'll be,
An' 'oo's in charge o' the picnic? Me!
Pushin' an' panickin'—'elter-skelter,
'Eaven 'elp me at y' underground shelter."

An' the landlord round at the "Seven Kings"
Says, "'Oo's goin' t' build y' the blinkin' things?
I'd like a refuge as well's me neighbour
But where's materials, where's y'r labour?
Turn the 'ole country on to the job
An' y' won't 'ave 'ands enough, 'elp me bob;
An' if everyone's diggin' away like barmy
Well—where's y'r Navy an' where's y'r Army?"

Shelters? said Mike, and he drained his drink.
They ain't so simple as some folks think,
An' stickin' at 'ome ain't no pertection
'Cos y'r 'ouse comes down on the 'ole collection,
An' them open trenches looks kind o' cracked;
It's a proper old puzzle an' that's a fact.
An' there ain't much time for t' do the task in
So wot's the answer? Ah, now y're askin'!

H. B.



TWEEDLEDUM AND TWEEDLEDEE

"Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel."

["... a situation which, if it is persisted in, must bring bankruptcy to every country in Europe."—Mr. Neville Chamberlain in the House of Commons on February 21st.]

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Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Monday, February 20th.—Commons: Debate on Finance of Defence.

Tuesday, February 21st.—Lords: Czechoslovakia (Financial Assistance) and Currency and Bank Notes Bills given Second Readings.

Commons: Debate continued on Finance of Defence.

Wednesday, February 22nd.—Lords: Debate on Camps.

Commons: Debates on Social Insurance and Unemployment.

Monday, February 20th.—A gay March lies ahead of Mr. R. S. HUDSON, the Secretary for Overseas Trade. He is already booked to go to Berlin with Mr. STANLEY to talk business, and this afternoon Mr. CHAMBERLAIN announced that he was also to visit Moscow and other northern capitals for the same admirable purpose. In any action he may take towards bringing caviar within the economic category of a staple food in this country he may rely on the whole-hearted support of Mr. P.'s R.

Explaining the money resolution of the Defence Loans Bill the CHANCELLOR told the House that besides increasing his borrowing powers for defence from £400,000,000 to £800,000,000 it added A.R.P. and food stores to the ordinary Service purposes for which the money could be used. As we were now carry-

ing out a hot-house expansion which would be the basis of our defence for many years he felt that borrowing was



IN WELLINGTON'S BOOTS

WELLINGTON, 1842: "I believe we have been at something as like war, if it be not war, as anything could well be."

WINSTON, 1939: "The period through which we are passing is not an ordinary period of peace, but a period of what one may call 'bloodless war.'"

justified, but these loans, instead of adding to the dead-weight of the National Debt, would be repaid over a period of thirty years, being chargeable on the future Votes of the Departments. The original estimate of £1,500,000,000 for rearmament was not going to be enough. Of the £580,000,000 needed for the coming year, he proposed to take £230,000,000 from revenue and raise the rest by loan. The House, seeing in this a hint that income-tax might escape further attention in the Budget, let out an audible gasp of relief, but Sir JOHN warned it against the danger of rash assumptions. Even so his speech was found to be comforting, especially in its assurance that armament production was at last in full swing.

Mr. DALTON, however, remained unimpressed. In his view all this waste of money was only due to the Government's long-term stupidity; armaments makers should be heavily taxed and plenty of bomb-proof shelters built. For the Liberals, Sir HUGH SEELY, appalled by General HARINGTON's revelations about the lack of anti-aircraft guns at Gibraltar, had little faith in what he described as the smug statements of Ministers and believed

that rearmament was still being muddled. Mr. BOOTHBY, who is convinced that young Englishmen will soon have to submit to a year's compulsory training, approved strongly of the CHANCELLOR'S methods. Mr. McLAREN, a Labour Member, first startled the House by saying "God bless the Prime Minister for what he did in Munich," and went on to a most eloquent appeal for reason in Europe while there was yet time.

The suggestion made by Mr. HOPKINSON and others that profiteering was rampant brought from Captain WALLACE the reply that against this checks and counter-checks had been devised and were working satisfactorily.

Tuesday, February 21st.—The Lords, whose innocent passion is the destruction of rabbits in a manner as convenient as possible to rabbits, held back this afternoon with magnificent self-control from making the Third Reading of the Prevention of Damage by Rabbits Bill one of those first-class rabbit occasions, unforgettable to anyone privileged to witness them, in which dukes vie with each other to dig out of poachers' pockets engines more and more inimical to the rabbit-world. Clause One (*Power of local authorities to require prevention of damage by rabbits*) was faintly altered, but that was all.

In the Commons, after the CHANCELLOR had promised a Bill to amend the law relating to building societies, and Miss WILKINSON had been given leave to bring in a Bill doing the same thing from the point of view of the tenant, the debate on the finance of



AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME

"This kind of official invasion of private homes is not in accordance with our traditions, but that does not matter."—Lord SWELL on indiscriminate billeting of children.

DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE



CRYING FOR THE MOON?

In a notable speech Mr. McLAREN suggested that even now a conference should be called to discuss Disarmament.



"A little informal, I fear, Sir Henry—perhaps we should have had an unveiling?"

rearmament was resumed by Mr. CHAMBERLAIN. The main points of his speech were that the only chance for the resuscitation of the League was for it to abandon the idea of keeping peace by the imposition of force; a warning that we must face the possibility of not being able to pay for the maintenance of our enormously increased armaments out of revenue; his feeling that "it would be criminal to allow the situation to go on developing as it has been developing without making some determined effort to put a stop to it," and his conviction that the time for an international conference was not yet ripe.

Mr. ATTLEE accused him of complacency and also of effrontery in his references to the League, and went on to declare that everything was in a ghastly muddle and that it was all the fault of the wretches opposite. A statement that we were backing France up to the hilt, with men as well as munitions, was asked for by Mr. CHURCHILL (Mr. MORRISON gave it in his reply), who still wanted a Minister of Supply. He added that he was prey to a painful feeling that we should have had one long ago if

only he had not advocated it. In the rest of the debate, Mr. AMERY called for compulsory military training in peace-time; Mr. ALEXANDER suggested that armament profits should be limited to 7½ per cent. or else that the Government should take over a proportion of ordinary shares; and Mr. MORRISON reminded those who accused the P.M. of gloom that he carried his famous umbrella as a safeguard against rain, without necessarily prophesying it.

Wednesday, February 22nd.—In the Lords this afternoon Lord ASTOR made out an unanswerable case for a much bigger camp-scheme than that at present contemplated by the Government, which he considered totally inadequate. Camps, he said, were needed for refugee population, for evacuation in time of war, for school camps, for assisting "holidays with pay," and for giving useful work to the most hopeless section of the unemployed, whom he suggested should be enrolled in a special brigade. A number of speakers, including the Chairman of the Unemployment Assistance Board, Lord RUSHCLIFFE, and the PRIMATE, supported him warmly; but Lord

DE LA WARR's reply showed small signs that the Government have grasped the size of their opportunity.

A Private Members' day in the Commons was also dominated by the question of unemployment, Mr. G. H. HALL asking for an inquiry into the organisation of social insurance services, and Mr. EMERY (Conservative) calling attention to the urgent need of a more constructive attitude towards bringing work and workers together. It will be seen from Mr. P.'s Junior Cartoon this week that he too is deeply sensible of this need.

An Impending Apology

"Among the signatories are: Sir Francis D. Acland, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Sir E. Graham, Little Mr. Arthur Henderson..."

Daily Paper.

"He [Mr. Chamberlain] vigorously blows the pipe of peace, but the dictators are still constantly performing the war dance."

Church Times.

We're not surprised; he must be covering them with sparks.

Eminent Pessimists of the Present

ONE of our contemporaries (impossible to guess which) says that one of London's stores (goodness only knows what its name can be) was recently distributing some exhilarating little handbills, quoting the dismal prophecies uttered by various Eminent Pessimists of the Past.

It immediately occurred to us that the utterance of various Pessimists of the Present—who may quite possibly have become eminent in about a hundred years' time—ought to be collected *now*, because who knows how glad posterity may be to see how wrong they all were?

So let us concentrate on remembering what it was that Aunt Vanessa said not an hour ago after listening-in to the Third News.

Aunt Vanessa said: "If you ask me, I don't know what the world's coming to." Then she drank a glass of absolutely cold water, preceded by some little tablet or other, and went straight up to bed.

And if ever pessimism rang out through the sound of footfalls mounting steps on which the carpet, admittedly, has worn a bit thin, it rang out from Aunt Vanessa's footfalls then.

Again, what did our Member say, addressing a packed gathering outside the Post Office, less than six months ago?

"There are difficulties to be faced in many directions."

The more observant of his constituents realised, beyond a peradventure, that he *had* only one face to do it all with, which made the utterance even more sinister than it would have been anyway.

Grandmamma, last year, the year before that, and many of the preceding years, said quite a number of things that nobody in the world could deny were thoroughly pessimistic. Space permits of only a selection of these.

"Ireland will give us trouble yet."

"The climate of the British Isles isn't at all what it used to be, and it will grow worse and worse. Owing to the Gulf Stream."

"America has never been the same country, and never will be again, since the War of Independence."

"In a very few years' time nobody in the British Empire will understand the meaning of good manners."

"The world is becoming utterly immoral."

We have only chosen the *quieter* of Grandmamma's sayings, because some

of the others would probably be a bit too much even for posterity.

Then there was the lady who came to tea the other day and who must remain anonymous because her name, so far as any of us could make out, was only given by those who brought her as Miss Er.

Miss Er said: "Speaking absolutely personally, I think the whole of civilization is going under. I may be wrong, but that's what I *think*."

Risking an anti-climax we will close with what was said last week by a man called Jones who came to tune the piano, and did so, but broke off once or twice in order to refer to world-affairs.

"All I say to 'Itler is, he'd better

look out. And I say the same, word for word, to Mussolini. They're out for trouble, the both of them."

Disraeli in 1841, the Duke of Wellington on the playing-fields of Eton, and Mr. Gladstone on the back of a post-card, had hardly got a thing on these Eminent Pessimists of the Present.

All that we need to remember is that they are probably *all wrong together*, and very likely just as we are getting ourselves braced for the absolute going-under of civilization (*see* Miss Er) something quite different will happen—either the end of the world—(quotation from Grandmamma purposely omitted)—or something to do with the Gulf Stream.

E. M. D.



"I'll say I'm tough. I'm like this all over."

At the Play

"THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA" (WESTMINSTER)

G. K. CHESTERTON said of this play that nobody at sea ever shouts "Bad citizen overboard!" and there are aspects of *Sir Colenso Ridgeon's* dilemma that obviously do not properly concern a physician. When your car develops a sudden dyspepsia and you take it into a garage, you don't expect the foreman to pause with his hand on the bonnet, asking for an assurance that the car is put only to uses which are ethically above reproach; and things would have come to a pretty pass if before we were allowed to croak "Ninety-nine" to a strange G.P. he felt it his duty to make sure that we subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles and the right Party funds.

That Mr. SHAW also felt *Sir Colenso's* situation to be a good debating-point rather than a genuine dilemma is suggested by the way in which he chose to confuse the issue by throwing love into the scales. *Sir Colenso* has invented a cure for consumption, an injection which only he can employ with safety. He has selected ten deserving cases, which is as much as his laboratory organisation can manage at a time, and treatment has already begun when a girl forces her way into his consulting-room and persuades him, by showing some rough drawings, that her consumptive husband is a great artist whose life he should save. This means the sacrifice of one of his original ten, but he agrees to it provided that several eminent friends of his in the profession approve her husband's case. For this purpose he gives a dinner-party at which a number of well-oiled pundits (the exception is a very cool-minded Jew) are impressed by *Louis Dubedat's* talent as an artist and still more by his wife's talent as a woman. *Sir Colenso* has promised to take on *Dubedat* when he discovers, all in a few eventful minutes passed by ebbing decanters on the terrace of the "Star and Garter," that the boy

is a thief and a bigamist and that another of his guests, *Blenkinsop*, a hard-working doctor in the slums, is consumptive and without hope.

There we have the main problem;

to save his old friend and pass *Dubedat's* case to a famous physician whose notorious failure to keep abreast of medical research equips him for wielding *Sir Colenso's* serum as a most efficient instrument of execution.

I confess it has always seemed to me that *Sir Colenso* had let down his anonymous patient—the wretched member of the first ten who had been promised health and had already gone some way towards it—so damnably that his subsequent actions carry very little weight one way or the other; and in the last Act, when *Jennifer* tells him that she has married somebody else, his brazen complaint that he has murdered for nothing still further invalidates his claim to be anything like a fair test-case.

But as comedy this early assault on the Citadel is still great fun. At sticking pins into the most puncturable parts of humbugs Mr. SHAW still stands alone. *Sir Ralph Bonnington*, the booming adjunct of distinguished bed-sides, is the best farce tinged with the best satire; *Cutler Walpole*, Society's highly-paid removal man, is a type who will be with us as long as there is steel to be made into lancets; and the moment after *Dubedat's* long and emotional dying speech (a little too long for a 1939 audience accustomed to lines of not more than six words), when the assembled doctors, left to themselves, burst into bright callousness, is unforgettably good.

The play is well acted. Mr. BARRY JONES's personality is too attractive for *Sir Colenso*, but he plays him with excellent judgment. *Sir Patrick Cullen*, the Elder Statesman of Harley Street, is beautifully taken by Mr. STEPHEN MURRAY, who must have studied Diehards in all the deepest backwoods of the Right Wing; the *Dubedats* are in the safe hands of Miss RUTH LODGE and Mr. STEPHEN HAGGARD; and Mr. MAX ADRIAN as *Sir Ralph*, and Mr. HUGH MILLER as *Walpole*, help on the comedy, though the latter's manner suggested a K.C. rather than a surgeon.

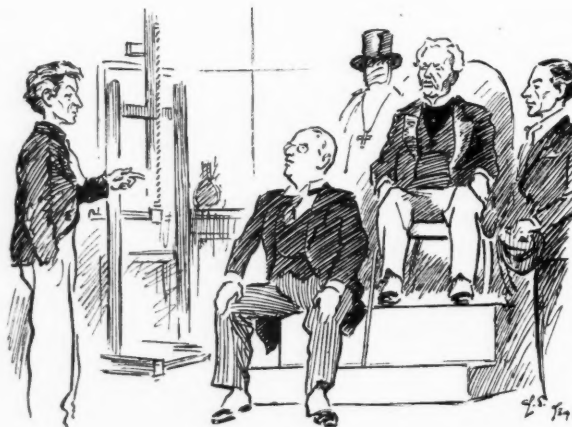
ERIC.



A BEGGAR IN HARLEY STREET

Jennifer Dubedat MISS RUTH LODGE
Sir Colenso Ridgeon MR. BARRY JONES

but Mr. SHAW, apparently not thinking it a sufficiently substantial one, arranged that *Sir Colenso* should also



THE WORM TURNS

Louis Dubedat MR. STEPHEN HAGGARD
Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonnington MR. MAX ADRIAN
Sir Patrick Cullen MR. STEPHEN MURRAY
Cutler Walpole MR. HUGH MILLER

find himself in love with *Dubedat's* wife, *Jennifer*. That being so, and his passion proving stronger than his integrity, it is easy for *Sir Colenso*

"TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH"
(KINGSWAY)

Times have changed since stage clergymen were either affected or pompous and the setting of a rectory suggested tittering. The modern stage clergyman, as Mr. OWEN NARES in *Robert's Wife* and Mr. LAIDMAN BROWNE in this play act him, is a hard-working, devoted, abstemious man, without assurance and quickly involved in grave trouble when his family break away from his teaching. In this play the *Rev. Mark Fairley* is a widower with three daughters, only one of them married. There is a Jane Austen beginning, with the excitement that the great house in the neighbourhood is about to be occupied by the rich young heir from Canada, but the play is quickly swept down the centuries, and is all about the unhappiness in the rectorial home as, one after the other, the unmarried daughters fall in love with divorced men.

The dramatist lands himself in a difficulty and does not surmount it. He shows us these two nice girls when they are most unstrung. We hear them saying on the stage all the things that people do say when their nerves are on edge, which they are sorry afterwards they let slip. Both Miss LYDIA SHERWOOD as the elder sister and Miss MARY JONES as the younger one act these parts extremely convincingly. It is their triumph to make us feel we know them both in calm and storm, that we can reconstruct their backgrounds as well as appreciate their deep emotional crises. But the obvious thing in real life is for people to separate and cool down. The argument in this play, except for one passage between the Rector and the Dean, all takes place in moments of crisis immediately on the receipt of some devastating piece of news. It is not the natural setting for a broadly-based intellectual discussion, and it prevents this play from being a vehicle for discussion of the Christian doctrine of marriage and divorce.

We hear enough of the Rector's views to see that in his general outlook he has wandered a good way from the main tradition of Church authority, and he supports orthodox conclusions from unorthodox and rather vulnerable assumptions. As he is the chief supporter

on the stage for the strict view it is unfortunate that his approach is so very much the approach of personal feeling. Once or twice he begins to elaborate from the text that "hard

out to his younger daughter with some force that her trouble would never have arisen if she had firmly considered that the man in question had already made his vows. But he is too human a father to make long speeches out of season. The argument is continually interrupted and broken off and never gets down from his side to the nature of a vow, or from the side of a restive young Canadian suitor to the equally relevant question whether young pagans, as he and his first wife, *Louise*, glory in being, can be considered ever to have made a Christian marriage or to have meant to take the Christian vows.

The lightest touches in what is not a light evening are provided by this Canadian couple. *Louise* (Miss NAITA MOORE) is a bird of shining plumage, hard and competent, and *Dave Manford* (Mr. ROBERT BEATTY) is so engaging and friendly that it is not easily explicable why he should have done so badly before inheriting his fortune. But the play keeps so very resolutely to the matter in hand—and the matter in hand is the unhappiness of frustrated love—that none of the characters get very much chance to do anything but expostulate in different ways.

We never see the younger sister's love, for the dramatist turns very decisively away from her and concentrates on her elder sister, but we are encouraged to fear the worst. Miss MARY JONES makes us genuinely sorry about this, for it is impossible not to like the *Prudence Fairley* she portrays; and we are also sorry that we only meet her under such very trying conditions. Miss LYDIA SHERWOOD has a much wider range. At the beginning, with a deft use of spectacles and the needle, she shows us an elder sister who has taken her mother's place only too efficiently, and is growing old too soon, and the sudden effect of the whirlwind romance brings about a transformation of gait and appearance and speech which Miss SHERWOOD employs with great effect, so that the magnitude of the disaster when it comes is brought home to us.

The end is not emphatic, but it is conclusive—an ending of renunciation. We come away with the knowledge that we have intruded on this decent family during some of the most difficult hours of their lives. D. W.



A YOUNG MAN IN A HURRY

Dave Manford . . . Mr. ROBERT BEATTY
Helen Fairley . . . Miss LYDIA SHERWOOD

cases make bad law," and he speaks eloquently against the idea that the abandonment of discipline leads to an increase of happiness, pointing



THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

The Very Rev. Dean Murray, D.D. . . Mr. JULIAN D'ALBIE
The Rev. Mark Fairley . . . Mr. LAIDMAN BROWNE

Noh Plays

WHAT is a "Noh" play? Do you know? I didn't till I was lent a little book about them. And now I've read it I'm still not very much wiser. All I can tell you is that a Noh play is a special type of Japanese drama—drama with what the book calls an "artistic intention," and apparently very little else. It is in short an art-form, founded some five centuries ago and so highly symbolic as to be practically unintelligible. Quite early on in the book the Japanese author says that "not many people, even among the Japanese, understand it." That's fair enough speaking.

The stage in a Noh theatre (for the plays are performed in special theatres)

is a platform sticking out into the auditorium so that (according to the book) the "performance becomes a part of us; but in order to prevent it becoming wholly a part of ourselves there is a space covered with pebbles (*shirashu*) between the auditorium and the stage." Well, you can see from that how symbolic the business is, because it'd take more than a few pebbles to keep actors and audiences apart if they really wanted to mix it. Unless perhaps we are expected to understand that, according to Japanese custom, everyone has removed his shoes before entering, in which case, speaking as one who has bathed at Littlehampton when the tide was out, I see the point.

To continue, this stage has four pillars on it. The most important one is called the First Actor's Pillar, because the First Actor stands by it when he

begins his performance. He and the other players, by the way, all enter and leave the stage by "the Bridge," which is a railed passage-way or "corridor, about 53 feet long" ("about" is good) leading to a "curtain of five colours" for exits and entrances, and leading thence presumably to the dressing-rooms, emergency fire exit and Honourable Stage-Door-Keeper. The other three pillars of the stage are the Mark Pillar, the Flute-Player's Pillar, and the Second Actor's Pillar, "to which the Second Actor withdraws when he has finished his part. As he occasionally takes the part of the Emperor's Minister it is also called the Minister's Pillar." Imagine an exit on a modern stage called, say, "First Grave-Digger's Exit" or "Captain Hook's Jump." At the nearer end of the Bridge, I read, is "a small and inconspicuous side-door which is called the Hurry-door or the Coward's Doorway. This is the passage for Chorus and the Prompters" (several of whom, by the way, sit right there on the stage) "as well as for the Actor who is supposed to have been killed and the Clown who has finished his part." A good idea, this last: one or two modern farces might benefit considerably by it.

"One of the distinguishing features of the Noh" (I see further on) "is the use of masks, which saves the actor the trouble of making up." Another advantage, I imagine, is that masks also save any inadvertent change of facial expression which, while all very well in the Western theatre, would just wreck a Noh play. The Second Actor, however, never wears a mask, "for he represents the Audience"—also to my mind a good dodge in case the latter hasn't turned up. "How's the house to-night, boys? . . . Tut! Tut! Still, the Second Actor's here, anyway! Let's start!"

IN a typical Noh play the Second Actor comes on first. He recites his opening song to a musical accompaniment. Then the Chorus recite it again in case the audience—exclusive presumably of the Second Actor part of it—haven't got it. Then the Second Actor in the Declaration "declares his name and the reason for his appearance. When he is supposed to be travelling he tells about his progress in a song called the Travelling Song, and at the end of the song he is supposed to have reached his destination." Neat, hey?

Then begins the "Representative Music which accompanies the First Actor"—his signature tune, so to speak. After this he appears. "When he enters the stage the Second Actor speaks to him, and the history of the place is told,



"By the way, whose cat is it?"

and the emotion towards bygone days is expressed in the form of a lyric poem. When the day draws to a close and the visitor (Second Actor) is now unable to bear leaving the place and while he is sitting there alone, there appears in his vision"—all of this seems to present a pretty problem in stage mechanics—"a noble figure who describes to him the days of Splendour and then dances gracefully." This (adds the book) is a typical example of the construction of the Noh play, "but some of the plays are more dramatically treated."

And I for one can easily believe it. Still, let's look at the plot of a favourite one called *Hagoromo* (*The Feather Robe of a Heavenly Maid*). It goes like this:—

"A stage property representing a pine-tree is first carried to the front of the Stage, and this suggests to the audience" (who must be co-operating pretty forcefully) "*the Pine Grove of Mio*. Here the Second Actor, dressed as a Fisherman . . . recites two songs which praise the peaceful seaside scene. Suddenly he discovers a beautiful robe hanging on a branch of the pine-tree." That he hasn't noticed this before just shows what a good actor he is. "He is gladly going to carry it home when the First Actor, as a Heavenly Maid, calls him from the other side of the curtain . . . and entreats him not to carry it away." There seems to be a strong hint of maidenly modesty in that bit about the other side of the curtain. Evidently the Heavenly Maid has hung her clothes on the pine-tree before taking a bath in the peaceful sea and has got caught at it. He promises her the robe on condition that she dances for him; and after a bit of bargaining and snappy talk about suspicion and the like she is allowed to put it on before she dances. The Fisherman lost that round, anyway.

"She goes high up in the sky while dancing, and gradually goes further and further, looking down upon Mt. Ashitaka and Suruga Bay, till she comes to the end of the Bridge, where the performance ends. The Actor indicates the end of the performance by tapping the floor with his foot. But" (naively adds the book) "sometimes he disappears into the Curtain still dancing, and in this case the Second Actor taps the floor with his foot." Thus, it seems, effectually nipping in the bud any attempt at forcing an encore by First Actor.

And that is the plot—if I may coin a phrase—of *Hagoromo*. Whether it can be said to have been "more dramatically treated" I leave you to work out. Some of the Noh plays, a full list of which is given at the end of the book, certainly appear from their titles to offer scope



"Well, how did you like the new baby?"
"I think you should have kept it from me."

for dramatic treatment. *Sumida-gawa* (*The Mad Mother in the River Sumida*), for instance; and *Kogō* (*Lady Kogō Found Out*)—did she or was she? And, above all, *Taihei-Shōjō* (*A Big Jar of Wine and the Dancing Orang-Outang*). I bet the film rights of that one have been snapped up.

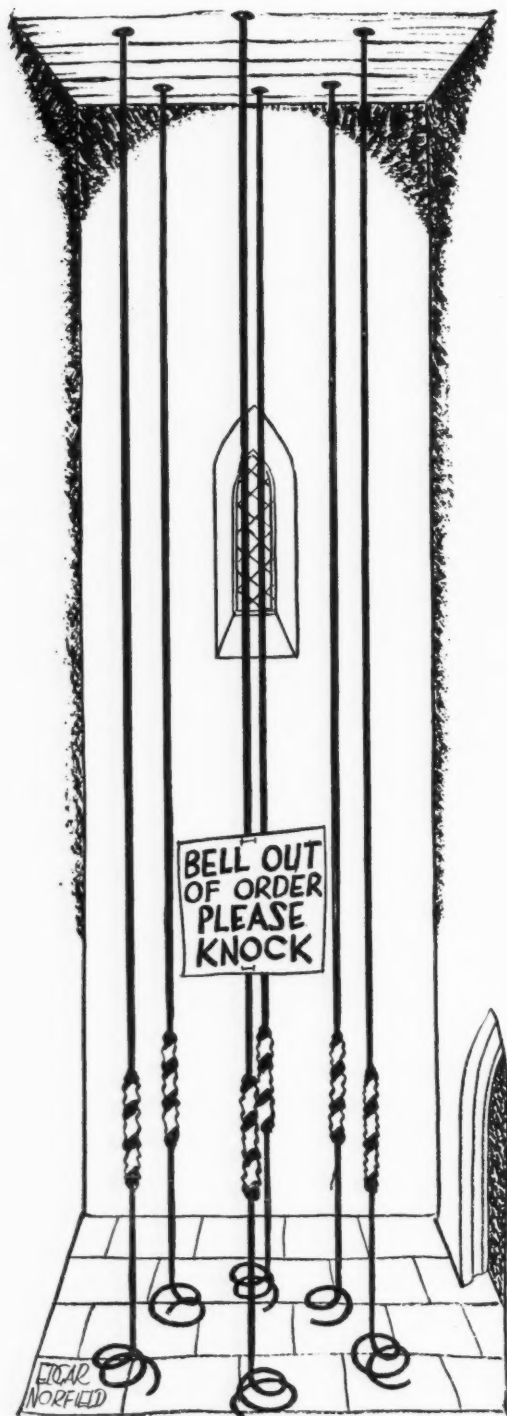
ON the other hand there appear to be some which don't look as though any drama at all could be squeezed out of them, such as *Hachi-no-ki* (*The Pot Plants*). And in a play called

Ohara-Goko, which we are definitely told "lasts more than an hour, three Nuns, the Emperor Abbot and his retinue sit quietly on the stage the whole time." While throughout *Settai* "the actors scarcely move." And in every single Noh play, I read, the action is invariably highly symbolical: "a tap on the knee by one hand indicates excitement" and "a few steps forward mark the end of a journey."

In short, it seems, if you've got no action you've got Noh play.

A. A.

Sound and Fury



SCANDAL is not one of the words I should use, nor disgrace, nor abomination. I should not be—I am not—filled with rage. This particular situation does not strike me as fraught with danger or whatever all the newspaper letter-writers consider it to be fraught with. But the height of *their* passions—

The height of their passions is extreme. They explode periodically on this topic and I fail to see why.

Look. Suppose you *do* come from a part of the country where they pronounce the word “modern” giving full value to the *r*, and suppose most of the radio announcers *do* say “modn”; does that anger you? Does it make you voluble with rage? In the name of phonetics, why?

If there were a word *modn* and it meant “out of date,” or even “pertaining to the balancers inside the ears of a lobster,” I could perhaps understand your objection; but nobody has yet suggested that it means anything but “modern.” This being so, nobody that understands English is going to mistake what the announcer means. Now what reason have you for being angry with him, more than you have for being angry that he speaks in a baritone and not a tenor voice, or for being angry with the colour scarlet as against the colour vermillion?

A Mr. Scurrilus of my acquaintance is a typical objector. He is the man who wrote to one of the papers the other day saying in the most abusive language that in the last ten days as a radio listener he had heard “lost” pronounced “lorst” seventeen times, “off” pronounced “orf” twelve times, “Ireland” pronounced “Ahlnnd” thirty-two times, and also a lot of crackling roars (that would be the man next-door using his electric razor). His letter appeared in the middle of a column of other similar expressions of opinion by people who were nearly as furious as he was.

(He is also, by the way, the man who bought a thousand copies of the *Radio Times* the other week so as to be able to send in a thousand votes for Mr. T. Thompson after that debate on “Announcer’s English.” Only of course he sent them in *before* the debate.)

I took it up with him in the saloon bar of “The Vowel and Grammar.”

“Scurrilus, old boy,” I said, courteously pushing his elbow out of some beer, “what is it that makes you so angry?”

“What?” he said.

I repeated the question and he replied in the words of his letter which he had evidently learned by heart. It sounded well, because he cleared his throat sternly at every comma, but I immediately saw that we were getting nowhere.

OBVIOUSLY the only way to get at the truth was to put my corps of mass-observers (who consider themselves a cut above the Madge-Harrison lot) on to the problem. I have just finished tabulating their reports. These show that 68% of people who criticise announcers’ accents are angry, 22% are annoyed, 9% are amused, and 1% misunderstood the question. The following are typical comments.

Man, 43, polish-manufacturer. “I don’t know why they talk like they do, that seem leery to me, time the News come on I mostly switch off, that ain’t got no bearing on life, I consider it a typical example of neo-Fascist ideology, cor. that make me wild.”

Woman, 29, housewife. “I mean, what I mean it’s kind of stupid the way they talk as if they was being refined, like, whoever heard anyone talk like that in real life, why a child



"No, it's not my business—I'm only doing it for fun."

could do better, it's a public disgrace and ought to be put a stop to."

Man, 103, gasfitter. "If I could get at some of them announcer fellers what don't sound the *r* in 'lawn' I tell you straight I'd break their — necks." (The observer states that this old man seemed to be under the impression that there is an *r* in "lawn.")

A subsidiary investigation was concerned with the letter *h*. Of the people interviewed 96% thought that announcers should pronounce this letter in the words *when*, *where*, *why* and *which*. Asked *hwy*? or *hwat* for? these people all replied that as the letter was there it ought to be pronounced.

Observers then asked them how they pronounced the letter *h* in the words *rhapsody*, *rhetoric*, *rhinoceros*, *rhododendron*, *rhubarb*, *rhyme* and *rhythm*. (My corps of observer-observers makes it clear that 99% of observers, asking this question, prefaced it with the words "Ar har!") The replies were:

"I never use the words." (59%)

"Don't be a fool, that's different." (21%)

"Why, it's obvious. Pronounce it like *h*." (7%. These people all had to catch a bus immediately and could not stay to demonstrate.)

Miscellaneous. (13%—and you ought to have heard some of those.)

Experience so far shows that my observers' attempts to go a little deeper and discover why the speech of announcers should make people angry are not being very successful. Asking them why seems to make 94.5% of people angrier than ever. The question is thus still very open and your own observations about it are as valuable as any; but for goodness' sake don't send them to me.

Don't send them to anybody. Remember your blood-pressure and curl up in a cold bath with some good book.

R. M.

o o

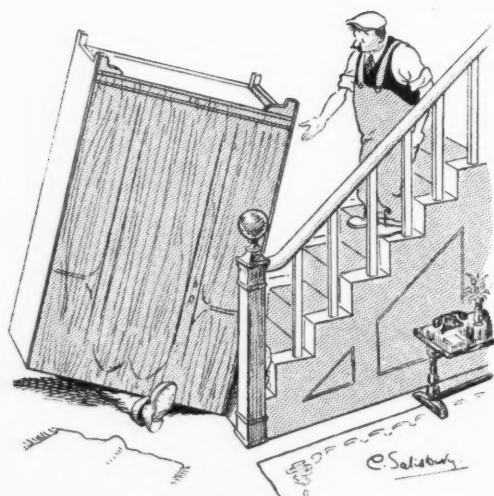
This Age of Chivalry

"As he stepped out relieved crowds of watchers cheered wildly, and women ran forward and kissed him. 'Thank heaven that's over,' was his only comment."—*Daily Telegraph*.

o o

"Night fling training—one of the most hazardous stages in the training of a modern R.A.F. pilot—can be witnessed on almost any clear night."—*Provincial Paper*.

It's the thick nights the public want to see.



"Don't think I fail to realise how inadequate an apology must appear, Sam."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

High Light in the East

IN *Indian Ink* (COLDEN-SANDERSON, 10/6) PHILIP STEEGMAN, a young portrait painter, describes a couple of years he spent in India in search of subjects who would pay for the operation. He was widely and hospitably received and mixed with all sorts of people, from the highest in the land to a leprous fakir; he was even invited to Nepal, which gives him the best part of his book. He has a lot to say and says it well, whether he is dealing with his one experience of the occult or a mad game of chess with a Highness, the ethics of which allowed the most incalculable moves provided only that the opponent was not at the moment looking. Being young and modern, he has a critical eye for the weaker side of officialdom, but to his credit he can see the other side too. It is no doubt old-fashioned to say that he lacked discretion and dignity; not every reader will care for his continuing to live carelessly at Delhi on the chit system with no clear idea of where the money is coming from; and, even with salt, his statement that during the Delhi week "those hearty officials" lived on aspirin and champagne is hard to swallow. But he has turned out a surprisingly good book.

Garrow Folk

Roughanapes (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6) has been awarded a special first novel prize in a competition sponsored by the publishers and judged by Sir PHILIP GIBBS. It deals with the *Forbes* family, owners of a marine stores business in Fishergate, the oldest street of Garrow, that not very heavily disguised locality where men built ships in the spacious days before the South African War; and in particular with young *Brian Forbes*, who has contrived to

inherit an artistic instinct as well as engineering ability. His father was an inventor born before his time, who in the opinion of his family wasted his time mucking about with electric and other gadgets when he should have been attending to business. But he dies, and his sons carry on, and *Brian* beholds young *Dorice Attwode*, younger daughter of *Sir Humphrey*, with her mother at the launch of H.M.S. *Avenger*, and thenceforward, it appears, there is a subtle bond between the two, reminiscent of the love-affair in *The Brushwood Boy*. For Mr. WILLIAM McDOWELL knows his Kipling pretty well, as we gather from various quotations scattered through the text. But many things must happen before the two are brought together at the end of the last chapter. *Brian* has to invent his *Forbes Stabiliser*, an adaptation of the gyroscope to keep passenger liners from rolling, and the War comes and blows him up, leaving him (in his own opinion) hideously scarred, and his gyroscope meets with a fatal accident on its first trial owing to someone else's mistake in the calculations. So there is incident enough to impart interest to the story. And Mr. McDOWELL knows his background and his people thoroughly. A good and unusual first novel.

Tables and Chairs

The vogue for period furniture is happily returning and that not only for the well-to-do. Despite the boom of what its enemies term the dentist's parlour style, it is obviously sounder as well as more pleasing, where space and type of room permit, to furnish with antiques. They can be as cheap or cheaper to start with, and their value is likely to appreciate; whereas second-hand three-ply and chromium would be a drug in the Caledonian Market. If we still had modest craftsmen who could make good furniture we ought to patronise them; but as we haven't we might do worse



"Twelve o'clock Tuesday, then—don't bother to change!"



HARRY TAKES HIS COUSINS TO SEE THE HOUNDS MEET.

Enter MAMMA AND AUNT ELLEN.

Mamma (to Old Woman). "PRAY, HAVE YOU MET TWO LADIES AND A GENTLEMAN?"

Old Woman. "WELL, I MET THREE PEOPLE—BUT, LA! THERE, I CAN'T TELL LADIES FROM GENTLEMEN NOW-A-DAYS—WHEN I WAS A GAL, &C. &C."

John Leech, March 1, 1862.

than buy Mr. W. G. MENZIES' *Period Furniture for Everyman* (Duckworth, 7/6) and collect with intelligence. Starting with Jacobean and ending with Georgian, its pages of excellent photographs allowing it to dispense with descriptive verbiage, this admirable handbook provides all the historical and technical details necessary to appreciation and appraisal. A general survey of the whole field is followed by brief histories of the chair, the table and so forth; all the snares from fakes to knock-outs are warningly signposted; and illuminating lists of past and current prices show the investment value of the most domesticated of all hobbies.

Old Man Hero

One might accuse Miss ANNA GORDON KEOWN of caricaturing some of the people in her new book, *Wickham's Fancy*

(Macmillan, 7/6), and of moving them too lightheartedly between the planes of everyday life and fantasy, but to make such a complaint of a book so delightful in spirit would be too ungrateful. Mr. Wickham, who dominates action and interest, is likely to be a permanent addition to the gallery of dear old people in fiction, and he is no mawkishly dear old man at that, but naughty and kind and gruff and benevolent all at once. It is harrowing to watch sponging Mr. Batty and muddling Mrs. Bunwell as they destroy his lovely plan of life, but at the end, when the great friend whom he has long expected comes at last, such things become unimportant to the reader. Miss KEOWN's descriptions of country ways cleverly combine the simple with the sinister—and even the slightly silly—but her story itself is all sweetness and light. The mixture may not be to all tastes, but many will find it most refreshing.

E. R.

It must be a good lark for an editor of the austere *Quarterly* to sit down and turn out an historical romance such as *Gloriana*, by C. E. LAWRENCE (MURRAY, 7/6). It begins, as it should, with a boy running away from a home where he is ill-treated. Young *Oliver Barton* thought first of the sea, but an attack of seasickness on his way round from Dover to London made him think twice. After some wandering about the pleasant countryside of Limehouse he joined a company of strolling players, and from them passed to Burbage at the Globe. Here Shakespeare appears, casually as would happen in actual life, and there is an excellent account of the first production of *Julius Cæsar*. It is after this period that *Oliver* goes to the Court, and Elizabeth takes charge of the book; not the *Gloriana* of her youthful radiance; the time is that of Essex's treason, and she is an ageing woman in the sixties. But Mr. LAWRENCE, thank goodness, is an ardent devotee. She still remains "*Gloriana regnant and triumphant; Gloriana unconquerable; Gloriana, with all her faults and wisdom and burden of years, beyond the influence of the ages, deathless.*" That's the way to write about Elizabeth. The book closes "and so to the happy ending." *Oliver* was in luck. There was a moment a few pages back when the Queen was utterly broken down, and *Oliver's* earnestness with the inspiration soared. For her consolation he speaks of the Earl thus: "... the observed of all observers, with his eyes like Mars," etc. This drew tears from *Gloriana*, as well it might. In her ordinary mood, she'd have had his head off for that accident.



"But for heaven's sake don't let anyone know I told you."

and he effectively demonstrates the truth that, while some of the older naval traditions—the importance of grog, for example—are inclined to fade, in other and more excellent particulars they are stronger than ever. It may be remarked that the precedent of drawing upon the Merchant Service for recruits for the Senior Service is a rather dangerous one. Even in the days of the press-gang the merchant seaman's was—officially at least—regarded as what would nowadays be termed a "reserved occupation," though the rule was not invariably observed in practice.

Retribution

Miss MARY FITT has given those who delight in trying to solve fiction's mysteries a tough problem to tackle in *Death at Dancing Stones* (NICHOLSON AND WATSON, 7/6). With two well-drawn plans to help them readers cannot complain that she is niggardly in supplying information, but if some of the people engaged in these misadventures had been more attractive the story would have possessed a fragrance that at present it lacks. Few men can have ever deserved drastic punishment more thoroughly than *Jarvis Mellowes*, the wealthy owner of a lonely seaside castle. To shed tears over *Jarvis's* death would have been superfluous, but *Inspector Mallett*, in his efforts to discover the murderer, overstepped the limits of decency. On one occasion when questioning a suspect he "grinned evilly," and on another "his red moustache bristled above his bared teeth." The problem here is pretty enough, but the people are for the most part none too pleasant.

"Tom Bowling" Redivivus

Fred Travis, A.B., whose life in the Royal Navy forms the subject of "*Taffrail's*" story of that name (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 7/6), is in the direct line of literary descent not only from the same author's *Pincher Martin* but also from a much earlier pattern of naval excellence. The narrative of *Fred's* experiences is always readable, frequently amusing and not unduly loaded with that peculiar brand of rather glutinous sentiment in which so many nautical writers seem to specialise. It also gives an interesting insight into the unobtrusive but arduous part British ships have taken in connection with the struggle in Spain. Like *DIBDIN's* ballads in their day, the book's plain intention is to stimulate recruiting for the Senior Service, whose attractions the author represents in enthusiastic fashion;

Confessions

We are asked, in the foreword of *And Still I Cheat the Gallows* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 4/-), to believe that these stories are told by a man who, having escaped detection, had repented of his sins. But whether we accept or reject this offer is immaterial, for nearly all of the tales are in the best *OPPENHEIM* (E. P.) manner, which is as much as to say that they are reasonably exciting and thoroughly readable. "*Miss Fiske, Sir Somervell Glyde and Two Miracles*" is the most ingenious of the batch, and the last yarn, "*The Princess of Hebor*," is the most ambitious and the least satisfactory.

Mechanics' Corner

"Instead of wiping off the surplus oil from your elbows, smooth it all over your arms."—*Beauty Hint*.

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